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Social Aspects of Church and Community Development*

E. J. NEIDERFRANK

• Some social scientists claim that the neighborhood no longer exists and that the rural community also no longer has significance. It is true that these are more difficult to identify and to use as specific units of investigation in social science research. But wherever people live you will find some kind of local social system, some kind of a network of human relations based upon various factors or foci of common interest. People still neighbor with one another; and there still are the relations with civic groups, trading centers, and with various organized activities.

However, in many cases communities and neighborhoods in the United States have changed; they are not the same as they used to be. The main trend is that community relations and contacts are made over a wider area and between people who are less well acquainted with each other than was the case a generation or more ago.

Social Make-up and Dynamics

The community itself is a social phenomenon. Everything about it is of social nature—the result of two or more persons interrelating together in activities or in attitudes or in both. The concepts of community and neighborhood become realities when the affairs of a person or family concern two or more of them, when the joint action of two or more are required by each. Thus, we have local government, school systems, churches, public utilities, trading places, organizations, groups, expressions of leadership, neighbors and friends working and sharing together. These become the basis of community relations. They are the social aspects of the community, and of the church and community development.

Many things that make possible good living in the individual home or which affect the individual farm or main street business emanate from or involve things beyond the farm gate or business doorway. Even if this were not so, man is still a social being who cannot live happily in isolation. Human happiness requires at least some degree of being with other people. A major basis of this is still the local community area within which most of such contacts are made, even though it is different and sometimes less unified than it used to be.

Population Trends

Some communities are gaining in population and some are losing. In

(*Continued on Page* 2)

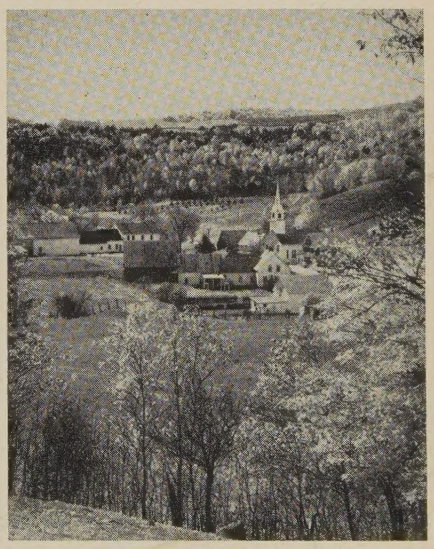

Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

* From an address before the Arkansas Town and Country Church Seminar, February, 1958.

(*Continued from Page 1*)

either case there are many implications for churches and other community life. Three outstanding population trends in the United States today are:

1. The big jump in the total population—from 132 million in 1940 to 155 million in 1950, a safe prediction of 225 million in 1980 and 300 million by A.D. 2000. Between 1950-60, for every 100 males age 26-64 who die or reach age 65, about 168 or a 40 per cent "surplus" will have reached the age of 20 to replace them.

2. The big decline in the percentage of people on farms—from 35 to 40 per cent in 1900 to only 11 per cent today, yet producing more food and fiber for the nation and the world than ever before. And 40 per cent of these farmers make part of their income from off-farm employment. Thus, only about seven per cent of our population live on what might be called our full-time commercial farms, but they account for over half of our total agricultural production.

3. The tremendous increase in the settlement of non-farm people in suburban areas and open country.

In all these trends there are implications for churches and other community life, as mentioned in the next paragraphs.

Business

Some communities are gaining and some are losing out as places of trade and local industry. Both types of change greatly affect local churches in various ways. Agriculture is requiring less and less manpower. Many small farms are being absorbed into larger operations. It has become more and more difficult for young people to get started in farming; more and more this will depend upon inheritance. An outstanding trend of today is the development of small industry and other non-farm employment in rural areas. This means that many people can shift away from farming without having to move away.

School Organization

Consolidation will ultimately put an end to practically every one-room school in America. Will this be good or bad for the community? For the children? Do young people have the career guidance and other education they need today in order to adjust to changing employment conditions and to find jobs away from home? There is also greater interest than ever before in adult education. This will increase still further in the years to come, for several reasons.

Church Programs

Should all small churches be closed? How small? When? Where? Why? How many people—how large a community base—is needed today to assure successful church operation, successful church organization and programs to best serve the people? If communities are changing in every other respect, churches must not hope to continue in the same way as before. What changes should it make in order to best serve members and bring in the unchurched?

The church is a most important social institution in rural America. Studies show that in certain rural areas, especially in the South, it is the one institution to which more people are in touch with than any other single organization or agency outside of the public school. Churches mean much to people in rural areas. In many cases they are the last stronghold of local unity and local consciousness.

Health and Welfare Services

Expanding communities are concerned with how to obtain these when they are lacking or are inadequate. Declining communities are trying to hold on to what they have, and they cannot hope to enlarge or improve such services except by cooperating with other communities, other counties. What actions are needed to preserve and improve health services in changing rural areas? Should churches help? If so, what can they do? There are problems relating to public and private welfare services, in both expanding and declining communities.

Recreation and Social Life

The same is true of this area of living. People are turning to new outlets and new forms of recreation and social life, especially the young people. The changing demands of work are providing still more leisure time and concern about what to do with it. Inadequate opportunities for social life of today's standards is meaning that many young people turn away from the home and the local community to seek such opportunities elsewhere. What would be the positive attitude and positive strategy for churches to take in the problems of changing social life, in fulfilling their role in community leadership?

Levels of Living

Today the average level of living in rural areas is higher than ever before, as measured by possession of home conveniences and expenditures for various services. Differences between rural and urban standards are all but completely extinguished, on the average. The spending of rural people for food, clothing, health, recreation and other living components of living are more nearly like urban spending. But there are still gaps, still areas of disadvantage in services and in levels of living of many families. And it is in these where often there is also the greatest surplus population, the greatest need for adjusting away from agriculture to better employment opportunities.

More income is a basic need in rural areas across the land—more income from better farming and from new sources other than farming. Tremendous changes—many factors beyond the farm and beyond the local community—are affecting and can affect the matter of income today. Those in turn affect other aspects of community life including churches. Can churches—clergymen—do anything to help protect and improve the economic life of the community? If so, what? Should they try to do so, or is this more properly beyond their sphere of concern and leadership? Various new programs are underway aimed at improving income in rural areas,

especially non-farm employment of farm people who may want to shift their labors away from farming. Clergymen should know about them.

Cooperation and Correlation

These are the keystones to sound church and community development today. The church can no longer progress, or even stay alive, by going it alone or by operating as it once did. Neither can any other agency or organization. Churches and organizations are a part of a total community in which there is developing more and more commonality of interests, inter-relatednesses, and town-country relations. They are a part of a total community in which each part has an important contribution to make, including churches, but a contribution which will be greater the more there are common understandings, wide-spread participation in planning, and correlating programs that support each other.

At the same time there must be continued efforts to preserve those values of the old that give balance and unity to life. For examples, love and neighborliness, individual initiative and self-reliance, local leadership and group action, family tradition and community consciousness. These values can be preserved, by the things we say and do in our everyday operation.

Churches will change in number and location and in hookup with one another. But most of all, they will change in program in order to provide the people with what they need and want under new conditions of living. Greater understanding of the wider environment will be needed on the part of both the small community and the larger one. Most of all, clergymen will be more sensitive to the attitudes and opinions of the people and to the newer needs for spiritual uplift and interpretations arising out of the changed conditions of living.

Yes, the community of today is different from that of yesterday. It will be still more different tomorrow. Some may decline further but many will also be rebuilt. Communities are being rebuilt today; more can be. At the same time there will be growing interdependence between the small community and larger center, and a joint responsibility of each toward the other.

Photo by Eva Luoma

Your Harvest Festival

• Have you overlooked ordering *An Order of Service for a Harvest Festival?* If you have, you may still secure copies from your denominational board or from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $1.50 for each 100 copies.

Reflection Books

• Association Press announces a contest for churches and church-related agencies involving its religious paperbacks, *Reflection Books.* Each of the five most stimulating reports on the effective use of *Reflection Books* will bring the winning church, minister of layman 100 free copies of any combination of the 24 Reflection Book titles available.

Contestants may send their reports directly to "Reflection Books Use Award," Association Press, 291 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y., or channel them through their bookstores. Ideas from the five winning reports will be made available to all interested churches and individuals who request them from Association Press.

Thanksgiving

• Christian thanksgiving is for all that God gives, not just the part we happen to like. It is never true that we have nothing for which to be thankful.

Consider the occasions on which our lord thanked God. When people did not believe him, he thanked God that what was hidden from the wise and understanding was revealed to babes. (*Matthew* 11:25) When he was faced with too large a crowd for the food available, he thanked God for what food there was. (*Mark* 8:6). When one of his close friends died, he thanked God before his tomb for power over death. (*John* 11:41). And when he was facing his own death, he thanked God for the body and blood he was about to give. (*Mark* 14:23.)

Contrast these occasions with his comment on the Pharisee who thanked God for his high standard of living and conduct compared with those of other people—*Luke* 18:11. It is apparent that when we thank God because we are not as other men are—homeless, vicious, hungry —we make little headway with God.

Perhaps we should revise the content of thanksgiving this year and look for the parts of our lives which resemble that for which Jesus gave thanks rather than concentrating on our physical comforts.

We have simple faith. We trust in God's mercy and do not worry or carry the burden of past sins. We have something to give, though it seems little in the face of the world's needs. We can be living parts of the Body of Christ, serving and suffering and filling the world with hope. THANK GOD.

—Philip Humason Steinmetz

• Brooks Hays, U.S. Congressman from Arkansas, is also president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Boardman Press, which is a unit in the publishing division of the Sunday School Board of the Convention, has just published a book by the Congressman entitled "This World: A Christian's Workshop."

Harvest Hymn

Now autumn strews on every plain,
His mellow fruits and fertile grain;
And laughing plenty, crown'd with sheaves,
With purple grapes, and spreading leaves,
In rich profusion pours around
Her flowing treasures on the ground.
Oh! mark the great, the liberal hand,
That scatters blessings o'er the land;
And to the God of nature raise
The grateful song, the hymn of praise.

The infant corn, in vernal hours,
He nurtured with his gentle showers,
And bade the summer clouds diffuse
Their balmy store of genial dews.
He mark'd the tender stem arise,
Till ripen'd by the glowing skies,
And now, matured, his work behold,
The cheering harvest waves in gold.
To nature's God with joy we raise
The grateful song, the hymn of praise.

The valleys echo to the strains
Of blooming maids and village swains—
To him they tune the lay sincere,
Whose bounty crowns the smiling year.
The sounds from every woodland borne
The sighing winds that bend the corn,
The yellow fields around proclaim
His mighty, everlasting name.
To nature's God united raise
The grateful song, the hymn of praise.

—Felicia Dorothea Hemans

• Almighty God, the creator of the universe, we thank thee for the wonderful manifestations of thy work. Especially we give thanks for the agricultural scientists who trace the blue prints of thy planning.

For the wonders which chemistry brings to light in minute forms of life and miracle working elements, we give thee thanks.

For the scientists who trace the amino acids and the vitamins in all their complexity, we thank thee.

For knowledge of the principles of genetics and other factors in the reproduction of plants and animals, we praise thee.

For inquiry into nutritional values and sanitation through which wholesome food is known and kept good, we thank thee.

Let all who seek truth feel a companionship with thee, and in finding it praise thee as their maker and Lord. Bless abundantly the agricultural scientists to pursue truth and come to a larger understanding and appreciation of thee. *Amen.*

—Mark Rich

A Farmer's Prayer of Thanksgiving

• Lord, I am grateful that I am a farmer. I am glad to live close to the earth that You have made. I am happy to spend so much of my time in the open air, under the bright sun, the symbol of Your own light and justice. I am grateful for the rain and for the freshness that it brings—the rain, a symbol of Your rich and undying blessings.

I am happy to cooperate with You in Your work of continuous creation, by growing the food that men need to sustain life.

By your almighty power You make grow the seeds I plant. You fill the earth with minerals. You send the rain and the sun, the wind and the snow—and the dry, hard seeds I plant are raised to soft, green life. You have given men great wisdom and cleverness to build machines that make the labor of the farmer much less burdensome.

Dear Lord, I am in Your almighty hands. I depend upon You for everything. If I sow the seed and cultivate the young plants, and You do not see fit to give me a good harvest, I will be satisfied. You are the Lord and Master and Creator of all things. You know what is good for me and what would do me harm. I trust You, absolutely and without question.

I thank You again for choosing me to be a farmer. I beg of You never to let me forget my great advantages of closeness to You, absolute trust and confidence in You, and the fullness and richness of my life, close to the earth that You have made and have so marvelously blessed.

Lord, I am grateful that I am a farmer. Amen.

This prayer is taken from the RURAL LIFE PRAYERBOOK, published by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference

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Influence

Do a deed of simple kindness;
Though its end you may not see,
It may reach, like widening ripples,
Down a long eternity.

—Joseph Morris

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Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Changing Agriculture in the United States*

LIPPERT S. ELLIS

• Farming in the United States represents an important factor in the nation's economy. But this business of farming is made up of many small, competing units. A recognition of these two fundamental facts is essential to an appreciation for the importance of agriculture to our total economy and for an understanding of the problems facing a rapidly changing industry.

Realized gross farm income in 1956 was over 34 billion dollars. Compare this with the income of General Motors Corporation, our largest industrial enterprise, that had sales of a little less than 11 billion dollars in 1956.

Agriculture, including production, processing, and marketing of farm commodities, accounts for approximately 40 per cent of the total disposable income of the United States. The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Commerce has estimated that 41.1 per cent of the disposable income of U.S. consumers is spent for food and clothing. (These include fish, not usually considered an agricultural product, and synthetics.) Another 4.1 per cent is spent for tobacco and alcoholic beverages which have their origin in agriculture. Without question, this agricultural industry of ours is an important factor in the economic life of our country. This is entirely aside from the fact that it is from the land and those who manage it that we secure most of those things that make up our food and clothing.

Agriculture, taken as a whole, is a significant factor in the economic life of this country. But the agriculture of this country is made up of relatively small, competing units. As a matter of fact, there are about 4.8 million of them. This means that the bargaining power of agriculture is relatively low compared with that of big business and organized labor. This is one of the fundamental problems facing the agricultural industry.

Farm Population

One of the most obvious and yet most significant changes on the American agricultural scene is that of population. While the total United States population has increased from 106 million in 1920 to 172 million in 1957, farm population has declined from 31.4 million to 20 million during the same period. Farm population now accounts for 12 per cent of our total population.

In appraising the current situation, we need to remember that the shift of population from the farm to industries, the trades, and the services has been going on for a long time. However, the rate increased tremendously in the years after 1940. Between 1940 to 1957 farm population declined from 30 million to the present 20 million.

This influence has been reflected in many ways. It is seen in the rural-reared leadership found in all aspects of our society.

Labor and Efficiency

At the same time that farm population was declining, the labor force on farms quite naturally declined, also. The number of workers on farms declined gradually from 13.5 million in 1910 to 9.5 million in 1940. Since 1940 the decline has been very rapid, reaching 5.8 million in 1957. The farm labor force now represents 9 per cent of the national labor force.

Industries and the services have continued to absorb the man power released from agriculture. But we all know how farm production has

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* From an address given at the Annual Convention, Association of Southern Agricultural Workers, Little Rock, Arkansas, February 3, 1958.

U.S.D.A. Photograph by Forsythe

continued to climb. Actually, farm production has increased an average of 2 per cent per year, a rate somewhat higher than the rate of increase in total population. In other words, the efficiency of the American farmer has continued to rise. The output per man hour of farm labor has nearly doubled in the past 15 years. The end of this upward trend in the production per farm worker is not in sight.

The increase in the output per farm worker is likely to continue as long as farm managers are free to make use of the new technology which is being made available through research and education. For this reason, caution should be used in formulating farm programs which interfere with the managerial responsibility of the farm operator. In addition to the use of technical information, the increase in output per farm worker is the result of the substitution of mechanical energy for human labor; an increase in the use of capital; an increase in the size of farm; and an increase in the competence and importance of management.

The average farm worker today produces as much in one hour as he did in two hours in 1940. It required three hours for him to produce the same amount in 1910. The vast expansion in demand following the outbreak of war in Europe, with the accompanying favorable prices, accounted for the rapid increase in productivity after 1940. Rising prices and incomes enabled many farmers to adopt new techniques which they were not able to afford in the years during the depression. The important point for consumers to remember is that the farmers of the United States have continued to increase their efficiency and that the benefits have been passed on to consumers.

Size of Farm

The increase in the productivity of agriculture in this country has been accompanied by a decreasing number of farms and an increase in the average size of farm. The total number of farms declined from 6.4 million in 1910 to 6.1 million in 1940. This was a decrease of 300,000 in thirty years. But during the 14 years after 1940 the number of farms decreased 1.3 million down to 4.8 million in 1954. The size of farm has risen from an average of 138 acres in 1910 to 242 acres in 1954.

But these figures and comparisons do not reveal the true problem facing the agricultural industry of this country. Of the total of about 4.3 million farms, there are about 2.1 million commercial farms that sold products valued at more than $2,500. These account for 91 per cent of the value of farm products marketed in the United States. In other words, about 44 per cent of our farms sold products equal to 91 per cent of the value of all farm products produced and marketed in the United States. The problem for this group of 2.1 million commercial farmers is how to secure bargaining power in an economic society dominated largely by big business and big labor.

But what of the other 56 per cent or 2.7 million farms? Of them, 0.9 million can be classed as residential farms, occupied by retired persons who are not dependent upon the income from the farm for their livelihood or by persons having a business in town but who prefer to live in the country. These farms accounted for 0.26 per cent of the market value of farm products. They do not constitute a serious factor in the overall farm problem except as the produce from them may represent a competitive factor in the market.

Of the remaining 1.8 million farms, about 1.2 million are operated by full-time operators and about 0.6 million by part-time operators. In general, these are the small, undercapitalized farms that have not been able to take advantage of modern technology or to make use of labor-saving equipment. This 37 per cent of our farms produced less than 9 per cent of the farm products going to market. The problem for this group of 1.8 million farmers and their families is one of adjustment.

Division of Retail Food Dollar

Consumers, I know, are concerned with the high price of all commodities, including those in their food budget. Consumers need to know that the farmer is receiving less of the food dollar now than he did several years ago. For example, in 1945 the farm share of the retail food dollar was 53 cents. In 1951 it was 49 cents. The farmer's share of the food dollar has continued to decline since that time.

Purchasing Power

The purchasing power of an average hour of factory labor has increased with reference to most food products since 1939. In that year, the income from an average hour of factory labor would purchase 8.0 loaves of bread. On a basis of records for the first 8 months of 1957, an hour of factory labor would purchase 11.0 loaves of bread. An average hour of factory labor during the first 8 months of 1957 would purchase more beefsteak, milk, butter, bacon, eggs, potatoes, oranges, and other farm commodities than could be purchased with the income from an hour of factory labor in 1939.

Cost-Price Squeeze

While a larger share of the retail food dollar has been going for marketing services, and while the food purchasing power of factory wages has been increasing, farmers have been caught in a cost-price squeeze that has become almost unbearable for large numbers of them. The index of prices received by farmers declined between 1951 and 1955. In 1951 it was 302. By the first quarter of 1956, the index had fallen to 228, but by the third quarter of 1957 some recovery had been made and the index stood at 246. During the same period, the cost squeeze was on. The index of prices paid by farmers stood at 282 in 1951 but with some variation continued to increase until the index was 301 on January 15, 1958. At that time the estimated parity ratio was 82, down from 107 in 1951.

A complete analysis of the nature and effect of the cost-price squeeze on various groups of producers would be impossible in this paper. Any one generalization will not hold true under all circumstances. The prices received by farmers for different commodities have varied greatly. Likewise, the prices of various cost items have varied greatly. However, the cost-price squeeze has been and still is very real for large numbers of producers. For some it has meant disaster.

But adjustments have been taking place. Some of them have already been mentioned. Since 1940 there has been an average annual loss from the farms of nearly 600,000 persons. Income of farm people from non-farm sources has been rising steadily since 1935, until now approximately one-third of the total farm income is from non-farm sources. This merely represents an attempt to adjust to the problem created by the cost-price squeeze. Farmers have substituted mechanical equipment for labor. They have increased the size of their farms in order to make more effective use of equipment. They have made use of technical information made available through research and education. These and other means have been taken by farm operators to adjust to the cost-price squeeze with which they have been plagued since 1952. The most efficient operators have benefited by the adjustments, but so have all consumers.

Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

• What does Thanksgiving mean to you? Too many of us today overlook the "food for thought" at the Thanksgiving table. Thanksgiving's a time to take your family to worship for prayer and thanks.

Mennonite Publishing House Marks 50th Anniversary

• The Mennonite Publishing House, from its headquarters in Scottdale, Pa., publishes, for the denomination, books, periodicals and tracts. It also runs seven bookstores and has recently, in connection with its 50th anniversary celebration, enlarged the Weaver Book Store in Lancaster, Pa., so that shop will have four times as much space as it has in the present store. The current inventory of this store is about 70,000 volumes. Publishing house officers say the new store will be a complete religious supply center for homes, Sunday schools and churches of all Protestant denominations.

"Christmas"

• "Christmas," the Augsburg Press annual, will have a run of 150,000 copies this year. The first volume of the annual came out twenty-eight years ago. The annual never contains any advertising, is built around Christ as the central theme, eschews Santa Claus, and *never* uses the abbrevation "Xmas." To date more than 2,350,000 copies of "Christmas" have been sold.

Notes on Recollections

XI. The Chapter Named Nova Scotia

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• There is a chapter in my life named Nova Scotia and it has been one of the most interesting of all. It opened over a quarter of a century ago when an institution in New York interested in adult education asked me to spend a week in and about Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and interpret plans and programs of St. Francis Xavier University there. I went in early December, and my train plowed straight into a raging blizzard. I also met some of Canada's great and good men and women.

At the railroad junction of Truro two men strong and tall greeted me warmly. There were Dr. (now Msgr.) M. M. Coady and the late A. B. Macdonald. They were on the faculty of St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, and were starting a work in adult education. This is the Dr. Coady who is known and respected in every village of the Maritimes because of his vigorous and courageous promotion of "adult education by means of economic cooperation."

After a long wait in a hotel lobby, we took a train that pushed slowly toward the town of Antigonish. This is an Indian place name. The people in the town are mainly Scots and Roman Catholic. (When I came back to New York, some of my friends said I must be mistaken about the combination. I later learned that about sixty per cent of the people of Eastern Nova Scotia were Scots and Catholic.) We arrived at Antigonish at about 1:30 A. M., after Msgr. Coady had inspected my underwear to learn if I could stand the climate. Fortunately I had brought a special suit of heavy woolen underwear.

Soon what has become a great movement began to unfold. Of course, it was then largely a plan and a hope. Yet, not altogether so. The men and women had dreamed dreams before and had implemented them. With only a field available, they had conducted with almost no expense small experiments and demonstrations. They had taught some farm groups in classes. And one of the pioneers, Dr. J. J. Tompkins, had gone to Denmark to see the folk schools there.

Dr. Tompkins was then a parish priest at Canso, one of the most Eastern villages on the mainland of North America. We must go to talk with him, it was said. We went through the blizzard, and I actually went through towns that I never saw—the snow was falling so heavily. The tall and strong men of Antigonish put me into a borrowed fur coat and placed hot bricks at my feet. They put an extra strong man into the back seat to shovel us out of snow-drifts when necessary. He had work to do.

At the Star-of-the-Sea Parish in Canso I met with pastor and people in the parish hall around a pot-bellied stove of ancient vintage. It kept our fronts warm while our backs were chilled. I talked informally with fishermen, some of whom had come in borrowed shoes —they did not own any at the time. They lived mainly on such fish as they could catch, plus what they could make from flour, such as bread, griddle cakes, and other cakes. Plainly their situation was desperate. The parish priest had helped them protest to Ottawa, but he also preached self-help. Ideas have hands and feet, he said. Study and practice mutual aid. What you can do for yourselves is more important than what governments can do for you.

The people at Antigonish said they would organize mass meetings —but only to blast open minds and persuade people to organize in small study groups. These study groups were to study their own situation—and they were urged to take some appropriate action. From the powerhouse of Antigonish they would send out pamphlets galore. They also advocated study groups which would issue in economic group action. And it all worked out that way.

It was decided to emphasize credit unions as the first step in economic action. The legislature of Nova Scotia passed an act permitting their organization. Soon many local credit unions were started, and they have gone on and on. Credit unions simply receive deposits from and make short-term loans to their members. But, perhaps most important of all, credit unions give people an opportunity to learn by doing—they educate one another. People require experience in a credit union so that they can then organize other cooperatives. Finally, credit unions can make loans that assist other cooperatives in their early stages. Thus, Dr. Coady once remarked, when they decided to emphasize credit unions, the movement was established. Fishermen's federations, cooperative stores, farmers' marketing association, housing cooperatives, insurance agencies to provide hospital care, soon followed in large numbers. In a quarter century a countryside had changed.

The good people at Antigonish wished to take the St. Francis Xavier University to the people. They thought that promoting the welfare of the farmers, fishermen, and miners was as important as resident instruction. Thus they established an Extension Department that has on several occasions been called the most significant project in adult education in North America—judged by practical results. Three times the Holy See has commended the program, and large numbers of Protestant ministers have often been more than enthusiastic in their praise.

As I write this I have gone to Antigonish seven times. Most trips were on holiday, to fish, to enjoy the clouds over the glistening sea, but most of all to be inspired by people who believed in what they were doing, who knew why they were acting, and who acted vigorously to

promote mutual aid among primary producers. The results of their movement are both tangible and intangible. There have been economic rewards as people organized to secure some control over the economic processes on which they depended. But I have been most impressed as I have observed the intangibles. People feel better when they are studying even an unfavorable situation, when they understand that in which they have a part, and when they associate with their fellows in some constructive action.

In recent years St. FX has still emphasized study clubs. The cooperatives have organized "kitchen meetings" and all sorts of informal education. The radio is more widely used now. But intensive adult education by means of economic cooperation goes on. The cooperative movement throughout the world has a number of great peoples' movements, e.g. that of Denmark. But there is no more meaningful movement to me than that which was stimulated and encouraged by the Roman Catholic educators at St. FX. Fortunately, there has been some inter-religious cooperation, and there are zealous Protestant ministers who are identified with the movement.

Urbanization of Rural Communities

• "Urbanization of farmland" is proceeding in several ways, and the meaning of urbanization to rural people is a topic of significance to all concerned with the welfare of people, said Sherman E. Johnson, chief economist of Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, in an address delivered before the 1957 meeting of the American Agricultural Editors' Association, Washington, September, 1957.

"Rural areas can become urbanized in several ways." In years past the usual process involved the expansion of the periphery of cities, "or the establishment of a new center for the exploitation of the resources of the hinterland." It is evident that "automobiles and good roads have made it possible to combine rural living and nonfarm work." Modern transportation also enables farm people to engage in nonfarm work and also "retain their homes in the country." The results are often part-time farming or simply "homes in the country."

These latter years urban development has sometimes "leapfrogged" into the open country by the establishment of a new industry in a rural area. "Another leapfrog type of urbanization takes place when a suburban residential area is established, not on the periphery of a large city, but some distance from it, though still within commuting distance."

About 830,000 acres of farmland are used each year for urban areas, highways, airports, and reservoirs. Less than half of the land so used was suitable for cultivation in farm operations. In the next twenty years, it is estimated, urban areas and other developments may need some 20,000,000 additional acres of farmland. "Even if it all came out of cropland, it would be only about five per cent of our present cropland acreage."

Haphazard urban expansion has frequently made for "instability in the rural community." The "urban sprawl" may create undesirable and unstable conditions for both the farmers near cities and for the newcomers who move out from cities.

"The community consequences of urbanization bring into focus the meaning of urbanization to the people who are involved. Urban penetration of the countryside may bring both benefits and costs. Formerly farm people constituted a separate cultural group. But as a result of urban penetration on the one hand, and better means of communication with existing urban areas on the other, we are fast developing a common 'rurban' culture in this country. In the future, the greatest departure from rurban culture may be found in our largest metropolitan centers, among people who have little opportunity for contact with the open country. The rural culture will persist for a while in some isolated rural areas, but good roads, automobiles, school buses, radio and television, and recreational development for urban people in formerly isolated areas are rapidly eliminating rural isolation.

"There are opportunities for development of a rurban culture which will combine the desirable elements of both the rural and the urban environments. But there are also dangers of compounding the undesirable elements of both cultures. The people in a mixed rural-urban community will develop common standards of living in terms of desires for housing, clothing, medical care, education, and recreation.

"The transition to a common rurban culture will involve many 'growing pains.' They are felt in many areas at the present time. And the potentially desirable results of rurbanization are not inevitable. They require guidance from competent local leadership. . . .

"There is room for both rural and urban development. Rural living and nonfarm work provide roots in the earth for more of our citizens, which should result in greater stability for our democracy. Some admixture of rural and urban living is not undesirable, but rapid growth of urban activity in a rural area calls for advance planning and zoning to permit both rural and urban growth in accordance with desirable current and long-term adjustments. It may become necessary to designate some areas for exclusive agricultural use, at least for a period of years. Many of the conflicts that seem inevitable stem from haphazard development. They can be avoided by planning and guidance. But it will require capable leadership—leadership representing both urban and rural interests to guide the physical changes, and to promote desirable amalgamation."

In-Service Training for the Rural Ministry*

An Historical Analysis

MARK RICH

• In-service training for the minister in town and country was one of the first methods used for bringing about the rural church renaissance. It continues to be a widespread and vigorous activity.

Even before the appointment of Warren H. Wilson, as head of the Presbyterian rural church program in 1910, it appears that colleges of agriculture were exploring the prospects for offering training conferences to rural ministers. Colleges had behind them extensive experience with the farmer's institutes and were building toward extension service for rural people. The minister as an important leader in the rural community was considered a good subject to educate. Moreover, the colleges of agriculture thought they had something to offer the rural minister.

Among the schools which early began to perfect methods of in-service training for rural ministers were the Massachusetts College of Agriculture at Amherst, Michigan State College at East Lansing, and Cornell University at Ithaca, N. Y. The number of schools making such offerings gardually increased. So, at present, at least two-fifths of the state colleges of agriculture offer some kind of training experience for rural pastors.

The colleges of agriculture customarily offer courses from within the curriculum which lend themselves to an understanding of the rural situation and provide special information and skills. Sociology, economics, agriculture and other practical courses are commonly taught. The issues which are discussed in conferences fall within the broad area of rural community concerns. The extent to which courses of a theological or ecclesiastical nature are offered depends somewhat on the sponsorship and diversity among those who attend.

These offerings are open to all clergymen of any faith. Protestants attend in large numbers (some schools, to all intents and purposes, being Protestant), but Catholics join in the sponsorship of some and attend in appreciable numbers. All are open to all denominations.

Generally, some groups outside the college of agriculture, such as a state council of churches, a Christian rural fellowship, farm groups, and other church groups join in sponsorship or promotion and planning.

Some of the conferences make as much effort to reach laymen as ministers. In this regard they become training projects for church leaders, lay and professional.

Denominational and Interdenominational Conference

Denominations have taken an active part in conducting conferences for the training of rural ministers.

Interdenominational conferences have been held in large numbers. The first Congress for Rural Pastors in Pennsylvania was held in the First Presbyterian Church, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, December 6, 1910, with four hundred persons present from different denominations.

National church conferences have had a large place in the training of the rural minister. As early as 1910 the first of a series of annual conferences of rural church leaders was called by the Young Men's Christian Association. These conferences might be called national because they sought to reach all the special rural church leaders of the time. They were interdenominational and were sponsored by a national international agency. The other national conferences are well known. One was held at Columbus, Ohio, in December, 1915. Then, about two decades later, came the national Washington, D. C. conference and regional Ames conference in 1936 and the regional New England conference at Keene, N. H. in 1938. In 1943 the present series of annual National Convocations on the Church in Town and Country was initiated.

Another type of national conference has been introduced within the past decade; namely, the denominational planning conference. Held for association, planning, conferring, and for training they have periodically drawn large contingents of ministers and lay persons.

Centers and Institutes

A third type of training is offered in centers or institutes. Within the past twenty-five years a number of such centers or service places have been organized. While these centers vary considerably as to purpose, each seems to fulfill one or more of three functions. It provides an extension service which reaches out into the area with conferences, counseling and advising in a fashion similar to that of the Extension Service. The second function is to provide a center of rural church interest. Literature, libraries, the counsel of staff members, and an atmosphere representing the purposes of the center are the offerings. Third, conferences and schools on the rural church are common at the centers.

Perhaps it can be said that the centers, aside from performing the educational services with churches and ministers, are a means of preserving certain objects, traditions and philosophy of the rural church movement.

Theological Seminaries

Theological seminaries are playing an important role in in-service training. According to Dr. Ralph A. Felton, the first theological school to appoint a professor or rural church was Iliff Seminary. During the same

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* From an address given before a conference on In-Service Training, Rye, N. Y., May, 1958.

Photo by Eva Luoma

year, 1919, Boston University School of Theology appointed Dr. Mark A. Dawber for a similar position. Since that time a considerable number of theological schools have introduced courses in rural church. A number of colleges have appointed professors to teach sociology and to supervise student ministers in churches.

While the principal duty of these professors has been to train theological students they have exercised strong leadership in in-service training. In the 1958 list of summer schools, five theological seminaries announced courses for graduate work. These schools run from two to five weeks, and give opportunity for serious study by pastors and others who cannot take time out during the year.

Theological professors also sometimes supervise the work of students who are serving churches. This supervision becomes akin to in-service training when the student is mature and remains in a church throughout his seminary course.

Theological schools which extend the period of training to allow for field work either concurrently with academic instruction or during an interim or a terminal year are approaching the practice of in-service training.

Still another form of training which approaches in-service training is the summer church experience by theological students.

Graduate Study

Over a period of years, a considerable number of ministers have undertaken graduate study for rural church leadership. Often they later leave the pastorate for teaching, research, field work, or some other form of service. Technically, therefore, their studies are not of the in-service type.

On the other hand it should be noted that in many instances those who pursue studies continue in their pastoral positions, at least during their graduate years. In this sense, those engaged in studies are in service and the training to that extent is in-service training.

Graduate training seems to be offered in two principal types of institutions: colleges of agriculture and theological seminaries. A relatively small number of both types of schools seem to attract graduate students preparing for rural church service.

Some Observations

A survey of the almost fifty years experience in in-service training for the rural minister makes certain impressions:

1. There is a wide range of difference in the basic training of ministers in town and country. The in-service training programs sponsored by town and country interest have not aimed to compensate for lack of college or theological training. Rather, they have, by and large, confined their efforts to training in a selected area bearing on the rural church. While there is no uniformity there is a strong similarity in the types of training offered through the conferences, short courses and schools. Training has been a special kind of training to orient the minister to his task as a leader in town and country.

This limitation of the in-service training has the advantage of giving sharp focus to the training programs. It has the disadvantage of not giving many a minister the general training he may need. It is assumed that other agencies will concern themselves with this situation.

2. In-service training seems to be widely accepted among the denominations as a necessary service to the rural minister.

3. In-service training, within the limitations stated above has become somewhat specialized. The college of agriculture gives emphasis to the social sciences. The theological school inclines toward the theological, the ethical, the practical, and the professional approach. The conferences sponsored by rural departments and schools tend to combine the two approaches.

4. It can be surmized that the quality of teaching in the in-service schools has improved over the years.

5. While there is considerable similarity of point of view and materials in the teaching programs, few texts and manuals seem to be used as guides.

6. The number of ministers who avail themselves of in-service opportunities is apparently increasing. Few if any of the conferences outside the

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national ones draw numbers equal to some of the early schools. But there are many more conferences and schools being held. The extension of the training programs in the South is to be noted.

7. The postgraduate offerings for rural church leadership seem to be geared to the needs of those who are looking to special service. The question may be raised whether there are sufficient training opportunities for the pastor who seeks to be better qualified for a special pastoral ministry in town and country.

The Lord's Hour Plan

• The use of dedicated work-projects, as a means of supplementary church support, and for providing spiritual stimulation, is growing rapidly. The Lord's Acre plan, from *Exodus* 34:26, having dedicated farm projects, is widely used in the United States, Canada and on mission fields.

The question is often asked: What kind of dedicated projects can be employed in churches where wage-earners predominate, especially in non-farm, industrial and suburban areas?

Providentially, a favorable answer is ready. It is "The Lord's Hour Plan," with variations to include many forms of vocational giving.

The Lord's Hour plan is the giving of the first hour's wage, or portion of salary, at the beginning of each week; or, where the worker can afford it, the first hour's wage each day—"the first fruits of earning power."

The Lord's Hour plan has already proved very successful in many country churches which have used it in connection with the Lord's Acre plan; also in non-farm rural churches and in a number of city and industrial-area churches.

For further information about the Lord's Acre Plan and The Lord's Hour Plan, write to the Rev. Jack Waldrep, Religious Department, Farmers Federation, Asheville, North Carolina.

A Comprehensive Plan

• Communities must change with the times or they remain stagnant and decay. Recognizing that it is good to plan for the future, as it is in any family or successful business, a large number of communities are establishing planning agencies or coordinating councils. Their functions are varied. Some are established with the designated assignment limited only to "industrial development." Others are broadly conceived as having the prerogative of planning or coordinating activities for the improvement of the "whole community." Some involve only the businessmen of the community, others are representative of the whole community taking into account the contiguous rural areas.

The work of these important organizations is all too often lost in the minutiae of the urgent, and the most immediate community problems. The groups recognize so strongly the need to demonstrate tangible evidence of their effort that they cannot perceive the larger and, in the long run, the most important *vision of what they want their community to be 10, 20, or 30 years hence.*

A community cannot plan churches, new schools, parks, swimming pools, new roads, streets or sewage systems, zones for business, industries, or residences without materially affecting every other area of living which is significant to that community. How then can you plan one project without considering a master plan for the improvement of the total community?

In order to accomplish this task most planning groups will have to establish subcommittees with delegated and specific assignments. This will free the coordinating planning agency from the detail and allow them to perceive their primary function. In many cases, if not most, these lay-citizen groups will need to have available resource people to provide the technical assistance needed for good planning. Commercial community planning firms as well as governmental agencies should be utilized to the fullest extent. (Community Services of the Extension Division of the University of Nebraska is available to assist Nebraska communities in their organization and planning.) Projects should be developed as they fit into the over-all pattern of community development. And it should be recognized that this pattern will have to be constantly revised in the light of the progress achieved.

It is not the intent to minimize the importance of the work that is being done by the community leaders serving on worthwhile community planning groups. On the contrary, the purpose of this article is to serve only as a stimulant for better and more comprehensive planning. Out of the detail of the present, the planners of our communities must project the very best thinking into the ultimate community of tomorrow. They should use the ideal community as a measure of attainment. The community, if it is to succeed and thrive, should set its sights only on the best. It should not and cannot be satisfied with less!

—Reprinted from the *University of Nebraska News*

Positive Thinking

• Being on the safe side, being on God's side! That's the most desirable thing in life. I'm sure of that. I'm also sure that we put ourselves there only when we obey God and submit our wills to His. The Lord Jesus Christ gave us two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. . . . And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If we concentrate on these two commandments, we will be more concerned with the wonderful "Do's" of Christianity, and the "Dont's" will fall into their proper, unimportant places in our lives. Christianity is positive and powerful. Let us be about our Father's business of doing good; let us criticize less, and pray more.

—Dale Evans Rogers in TO MY SON (The Fleming H. Revell Company).

This Holy Earth

DANIEL SCHORES

• Moses was tending the flocks of his father-in-law in the area now known as Arabia. Leading his flock through the desert to the western edge of the wilderness, he drew near Mt. Horeb, believed to be a sacred mountain. He was startled to notice a bush seemingly on fire but not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." Catching his attention in this rather unorthodox manner, God spoke to his heart, "Moses, Moses!" "Here am I," was his willing answer. Then came the command, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." Frightened, Moses obeyed then hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God.

It took this rather dramatic experience to teach Moses that he should treat "holy ground" with proper reverence. Common sense should teach every Christian that all God's creation should be treated with reverence. As Moses approached the burning bush with wonder and faith, he heard the voice of God calling him to obedience. As any man approaches nature with awe and faith in its Creator, he too might hear the voice of God within. Paul once commented: "Does not even nature itself teach?" This earth on which we live is holy ground because it was created by God himself for a divine purpose. And had Moses only realized it, all the world is "holy earth" not just that near the burning bush.

The earth is holy primarily because it was created by God. From the first verse of Genesis—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—to the last chapter of Revelation which tells of the land of the new Jerusalem, this is a dominant theme in the Bible. The Psalms tell us that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Yet we who call ourselves Christian waste and ravage this holy earth.

Let us first learn from the scriptures that the soil itself is sacred. Because it sustains life it must be treated with proper reverence. This is true not only for the conservation agent, but for the farmer who tills the soil and the town-dweller who lives on the fruits of his harvest. Scientists have estimated that twenty-one times as much top-soil is lost through wind and water erosion as through depletion from the crops grown on the soil. Top-soil must be given respect as it is holy earth.

Likewise, the plants and trees created by the hand of God must be treated as sacred. Our pioneer forefathers forgot this as they cleared land for fields. Much valuable timber was lost forever through their wastefulness. And we still have those who sin by "burning the woods" each spring. Through our carelessness, bittersweet and holly is disappearing from our nation's woods. You cannot continue to harvest a crop without planting.

If plant life is sacred, so much more is animal life. "The cattle of a thousand hills" are God's. God provides well for all his creatures but again, unless man treats God's creation as sacred, wildlife suffers.

Who would deny that human life is sacred? Jesus reversed many ancient standards when he stated that "the Sabbath is for man, not man for the Sabbath." "An eye for an eye" was changed to "bless those who persecute you." "Thou shall not kill" was supplemented with "any man who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment." Man has sinned in many ways throughout the course of history, but no sin strikes closer to God's heart than man's inhumanity to man. When we learn to view life as sacred—as part of this holy earth—our faith will be more meaningful, our influence more lasting, our love more sincere.

The word "conservation" best describes the proper attitude toward God's holy earth. Conservation is, in the last analysis, the saving of all that is good in the world. The Bible is full of the story of practical conservation. Do you think that conservation is a new idea? It is not . . . it is as old as the law of Moses which required that "the land shall rest one year in seven." Men, then, allowed land to lie fallow and rebuild its mineral reserves for religious reasons, not for government payments.

A strip of unharvested grain was to be left around the edge of every field so poor families might harvest the "gleanings." That is practical charity and also conservation. Job protested erosion from allowing rain to wash unrestricted down steep slopes. Ezekiel warned against overgrazing. Isaiah urged using hillsides for cattle not for crops. And we are so proud of our "new" discoveries in the field of conservation!

God is the greatest conservationist. Rock is slowly crumbled by rain, wind, plant roots and soil chemicals until it is new dirt full of minerals. Vegetation decays to replenish the humus matter of the soil. From a seemingly inert seed God alone has the power to pull forth a flower or tree or corn stalk. No wonder that the earth is holy; no wonder that a Christian should be a conservationist.

The church, especially open country and town churches, should be particularly interested in conservation as their future depends upon the proper use of this holy earth. For a good tomorrow we must conserve today . . . and that does not mean to refrain from use but to use wisely. Conservation is our best insurance for "bad years," for the next generation of farmers, and for the future of our rural church and its community.

By studying many communities it has been adequately proven that a church's growth is directly related to the soil and its use. Easier to see, a church's finances are dependent upon the neighborhood around it. The larger the portion of land-owners, the stronger the local church. Tenants and renters do not show average interest in church attend-

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"Little Men in Big Societies"

C. ARILD OLSEN

(Following are excerpts from an address delivered by Mr. Olsen, executive secretary of the National Council of Churches' Division of Christian Life and Work, before the Cooperative Congress convened by the Cooperative League of the U.S.A. at Minneapolis, September, 1958.)

• I trust that I may re-affirm common convictions and relate them fundamentally to some of the common concerns we face today. We can build creatively only if we do not lose sight of the basic principles and the ideals which have made our country great. This means that we must always maintain the tension between what is and what ought to be. Our present age seeks to know more about itself from technical studies and scientific surveys than from prophetic insight. Our need cannot be met by a neat little 5 or 7 point program. Creative construction compels "a new mind with a disturbing consciousness of past achievements," unadjusted personalities, if you will, with a new sense of justice, freedom, and the worth and the role of people as persons.

My theme centers on my concern for people as persons, and on the question whether or not we are building social structures which will maintain and nurture the dignity of man and make possible the participation of the average man and woman in the very big and complex society of today. I want to consider some basic principles and presuppositions essential to the realization of these purposes, having in mind constantly their relatedness and application to cooperatives and mutual businesses. I am concerned about the *we* in "these we own," as well as with the effect on persons of "those" we do not own.

To me the question of what happens to people as persons is one of the great issues of the day. A basic question which is posed by the present social situation is the issue of personal integrity and responsibility at a time when groups, associations, organizations, and social structures assume many of the roles that formerly were performed by individuals.

There is need also "for a critical re-examination of the ethical responsibility of the individual in the common life, made necessary by the increasing complexity, size, and importance of social structures. Persons must be helped to understand what it means to participate responsibly in group decisions, whether political, economic or social, and also to react in an ethically responsible way to decisions set up so often by an anonymous social process."

This issue has been put clearly, it seems to me, by the World Council of Churches. It has stated: "On the one hand, we must vindicate the supremacy of persons over purely technical considerations by subordinating all economic processes and cherished rights to the needs of the community as a whole. On the other hand, we must preserve the possibility of a satisfying life for 'little men in big societies.' We must prevent abuse of authority and keep open as wide a sphere as possible in which men can have direct and responsible relations with each other as persons."

This is the challenge to the "we" and for the "we." This poses the problem of how we can make the word "mutual" come alive in large organizations. I am aware that the cooperative is neither political nor religious, but I believe that if it begins truly as an organization of persons, it must have a spiritual dynamic and an ethical content. . . .

I have always been among the first to demand that a cooperative be efficient in every phase of its activity in a highly competitive society. But I contend that its social aims, arising from its very being as an organization of persons, are inherent in its principles which must be built into its practices.

The cooperative, as an organization of persons engaged in economic activity will, in my judgment, succeed only in so far as it contributes to the development of persons. Are we really mindful of the pervasive character of economic life? One of my colleagues has reminded us that "economic life is less a part of life than it is an aspect of all of life. It underlies and permeates in some way all human activity. This is God's doing, for the material side of life can be neither ignored or denied." It is not an option we have, "but a built-in aspect of life.

Therefore, it is vital to consider what economic activity does to the life of persons. The economic struggle is also a struggle for the souls of men. It seems to me that the cooperative denies its basic purpose unless it effectively enables persons to maintain their personal dignity and to integrate their economic interests and social responsibility. . . .

One cannot compartmentalize persons. Therefore, an economic cooperative is also cultural, educational, spiritual—if you will.

The World Council of Churches has made a statement which I quote: "Man is not made for production, but production for man. For a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticize, and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible throughout the whole community. It is required that economic justice and provision of equality of opportunity be established for all members of society."

This is the ethics of group responsibility. This will enable us to create organizations which will serve the needs of men, including "little men in big societies," instead of frustrating them. Mutuality incorporated structurally and exercised cooperatively can instrumentalize ethical purpose and insight.

On This Land

WILLIAM J. RUPP

• On this land,—here is my heart and home!

The long meadow with its giant willows and the tall tulip poplar set against the western winds. . . . The lazy, winding creek with the alder thickets and elderberry bushes along the way. . . . The cat-tails in the lower swamp, the fish dams and the lily ponds. . . . The higher ground, retreating from the meadows, where stood a long row of bee-hives. . . . The old orchard where once a boy filled his pail with Belle of Georgias before taking the cows to pasture in the uplands.

This is my land,—the land where my fathers died! The wild daffodils coming back every spring to show me the borders of an old garden which the ancestral mother tended two centuries ago. . . . The quince trees and a wild rosebush planted near an old log house by children of another generation. . . . On the slope above an ancient spring the remains of that log house, and of the blacksmith's shop, and of the old barn. . . .And under a lordly willow the log hut where once the weaver pounded his loom.

This is my native land! The red-headed woodpecker at home in the old Baldwin, and the sparrow hawks in the giant chestnut behind the barn. . . . The killdeer making his noisy flight from one hillside to another, and Bob White calling from a fence post. . . . At the far end of a field a wild cherry tree toward which a boy once headed his team when turning the first furrow in spring plowing. . . . The old worn fences, shelter for the pheasant and the quail. . . . In every field the great old chestnuts, lonely sentinels against the sky. . . . Along every fence row the wild yellow apples so good for cider. . . . The woodchuck at home in the forsythia and ramblers along the lane, and the cotton-tail keeping house in the old rail pile.

This is my native land, rich and good! Land of the walnut and oak, stretching away to the blue hills in the northwest. . . . The rolling fields of buckwheat and rye, of wheat and corn and oats. . . . The old pasture bright with its goldenrod and Queen Anne's lace. . . . The woodlot, scene of labors through many a hard winter's day, bright with May apples and wild azaleas in the springtime. . . . The tall steeple beyond the trees, the church of my fathers, and my church. . . . Close to it the one-room schoolhouse, and nearby the ancient oak neath whose sheltering shade we children played.

And now, father in the field with his team just as he was wont when we were young, but moving slowly and bent with the years. . . . Mother, tired and worn, still in her garden with her flowers and peppers and beans and ground cherries. . . . A better house now, with tall pines holding up the sky, and shrubbery over the spacious lawns. . . .

This land, this good earth is my mother, and the mother of us all—given us to love, to dress and to keep! In this land, here is my heart and my home! This is my song and my joy!

—from *Pennsylvania Farmer*

HOLY EARTH

(*Continued from Page* 13)

ance and leadership. The better the farming practices, the more likely a man's children will remain in the neighborhood of their birth and will continue to support their childhood church. Long residence in a community also aids the church and its program. The natural friendliness of rural people and their willingness to cooperate with one another aids both the church and our traditional democracy. Thus for many reasons, rural pastors and people should preach against the sin sin of wastefulness—of both material and human resources—by teaching respect and reverence for God's holy earth.

May we like Moses realize that we live on "holy ground."

Find the Strength for Your Life

• America is a nation of strengths. Its industrial might gives her people the highest living standard in the world. Its powerful defenses safeguard her heritage of independence and freedom.

America is a nation of strong people. They have courageously resisted the cold war tactics of an alien doctrine. They have bravely stemmed the advances of aggressors.

America is a nation of growing spiritual strength. In its early years, hardly more than a tenth of its citizens were connected with religious groups. Since then we have put on much spiritual armor. Today 60 per cent of us are Church and Synagogue members. More than half of us attend worship services regularly. We are on the high tide of deepening interest in religion.

A French visitor to our shores in 1830, Alexis de Tocqueville, expressed his amazement at the power religion exerted upon the life of the nation. He found in America that the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom "were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country."

Thus did the French writer discern the source of our strong freedoms—our recognition of our dependence upon God. In our own day President Eisenhower has called for "a frank acknowledgment of our faith that He can supply that additional strength which, for these trying times, is so sorely needed."

Through the Religion In American Life Program, Americans are urged to do just that. This nationwide movement, backed by a vast advertising campaign, emphasizes the importance of religion in personal, family, community and national life.

Let this be our opportunity to help keep ourselves and our nation spiritually strong. Take to heart the RIAL theme, "Find the Strength for Your Life. . . . Worship Together This Week."

Religion In American Life Program, 300 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

Book Recommendations

(Two biographies)

Glorious Ride, by James M. Carr. Here is the life story of Henry Woods McLaughlin, one of the pioneers in the rural church movement in the United States, known to his many friends as "Country Church McLaughlin." It has been said of him that "no man, not even John Frederick Oberlin, surpassed him in his service to humanity through the rural church." Get to know him through this book. Published by Church and Community Press, 63 Auburn Avenue, N.E., Atlanta 3, Georgia. $2.50.

Bishop of Heard County, the story of J. C. Adams, Georgia circuit rider, by Dora Byron. He "deliberately chose to live and labor in one of Georgia's poorest counties," and so "for fifty years has been a living exponent of the way the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be applied to the hurt of the land and the health of mankind." Also published by Church and Community Press, Atlanta.

—Clayton Pepper

Young Minister's Basic Library

• James E. Sellers, assistant to the dean of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, told in a recent issue of the *Christian Advocate* about a young minister settled in his first parish who needed books for study and sermon preparation. He selected a basic library of twenty-one books for ministers, including more than a dozen full-length standard volumes on theology, the Bible, church history and preaching. The young minister selected his library from the quality paperbacks; it cost him $18.75.

• If you are moving please send your change of address to the Editorial Office of Town and Country Church. It takes about six weeks to process such changes and we do not want you to miss a copy.

Food in the U.S.A.

Highlights of address by Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson before the National Food Conference, Washington, D. C., February 24, 1958.

1. The Secretary points out the social, cultural and spiritual values of mealtime as one of the contributions food makes to family and national well-being. Family mealtime, he says, "should be the hour of relaxation—when we talk over the day's joy and to a certain extent the day's sorrows—but especially its joys. Mealtime is the hour of planning, the hour of cooperation, the hour of family living."

2. He says "America is experiencing a notable revival in family living," which is evidenced in a high marriage rate, a declining divorce rate, more children per family, increased church attendance, joint family activities and an increase in "do-it-yourself" projects in which all the family participate. "In all phases of this trend food has a fundamental place."

3. The Secretary says it is impossible "to overemphasize the tremendous contribution our agriculture has made to the growth and strength of this nation." The technological revolution in agriculture, he says, "has released nine-tenths of our manpower for non-farm production . . . this is an economic miracle—a blessing from free enterprise."

4. Declaring that farming efficiency does much to nullify the manpower advantage of the Communists, he says, "The average American farmer out-produces his Russian counterpart by about 3 to 1." He points out that it takes the average Russian worker 98 minutes on the job to earn a pound of meat, as against only 20 minutes here.

5. Calling our marketing system the most efficient in the world, the Secretary speaks of the "sensations" created by our supermarkets when set up at Trade Fairs behind the Iron Curtain. He cites figures to show that food is a much better buy today, in terms of hours on the job, than it was in 1914.

6. A major question is whether "we are making the fullest and best use of our food abundance." He says there has been a big improvement in diets since the 1930's when one-third of the family diet was classed as poor, Today, "only about one-tenth of the household diets could be called poor." But there are still many families in low-income brackets not getting proper food, and families in every income class whose diets need to be improved. He points out that in 1955 "three out of 10 families . . . were short on calcium." The job of educating consumers to better diets, he says, is a challenge to all—to educational agencies and the food industry.

7. The Secretary cites the use of U.S. abundance to help people abroad—refugees in Hong Kong, Calcutta, and Karachi—people hurt by natural disasters in Turkey and Pakistan. "No nation under Heaven has ever been so generous with its abundance," he says.

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Scouting is for All Boys is priced at 75 cents per copy. It may be procured from Boy Scouts of America, Box 521, New Brunswick, N. J.